

Idaho Wolf Management Progress Report

April 13 - April 26, 2008

Wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountains (NRM) were delisted on March 28, 2008. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) successfully recovered and delisted the population with the help of state, federal, tribal and non government partners. Management of these wolves now resides with the states of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. The 2002 legislatively approved Wolf Conservation and Management Plan along with the March 2008 Idaho Fish and Game Wolf Population Management Plan, as well as the laws and policies of the state now govern wolf management in Idaho. Wolves are now listed as a big game animal in Idaho and protected under the laws and policies of the State of Idaho.

Once wolves were delisted, the USFWS decided to discontinue the publication of the NRM wolf weekly. Instead, for the time being, Idaho will continue publishing the Idaho specific wolf weekly. Along with the USFWS, contributors to the weekly historically have included the USDA APHIS Wildlife Services, the Nez Perce Tribe, and the states of Idaho and Montana. Wyoming was reported on by the USFWS. You may review past wolf weekly publications on our wolf webpage and links along with all pertinent and updated wolf information and publications at: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/>.

Monitoring

Deep and lingering snows are keeping wolves in lower elevations mostly along winter range later than usual this year, providing more opportunity for wolves to be in close proximity to cattle calving operations around private ground.

Michael Lucid flew on April 18 and located the possible den of a potential new pack radio collared last winter in the Lowman area. Most other wolf dens have not yet been pinned down and wolves are still close to winter range.

Michael Lucid and Laura Robinson are working in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness attempting to radio collar wolves for monitoring purposes. Snow and ice are still along the trails normally open this time of year. A pack bridge is out also restricting horse access from Moose Creek upriver. They will be trapping on foot for the next few weeks.

Control

On 4/13, Wildlife Services (WS) confirmed that a wolf came into a barn yard and fought with a pair of dogs (1 guard dog and one stock dog). Both dogs were injured, but the injuries were not considered "life threatening." The incident occurred on private land south of Riggins.

On 4/16, WS confirmed that wolves killed a calf on private land near Leadore. This depredation was on a neighboring property to the site where WS confirmed another wolf depredation on cattle last week. Control efforts to stop the depredation activity continue.

On 4/20, WS confirmed that wolves killed a calf on private land near Council. This ranch is about 1 1/2 miles SW from the property where another confirmed wolf depredation took place earlier this month. Efforts to stop the depredation activity are ongoing.

On, 4/21, WS shot and killed a large, black wolf from a f/w aircraft near Leadore where several depredations on cattle have been confirmed in the last two weeks. WS confirmed that wolves killed another calf on BLM adjacent to the ranch on 4/23. Control efforts to stop the depredations are continuing.

On 4/21, WS confirmed that five wolves killed a calf on private land near Lemhi. This is the same ranch where WS removed three wolves earlier this month after wolves killed two calves. On 4/25, WS removed another wolf with a fixed wing aircraft. Control efforts to resolve the situation are ongoing.

On 4/23, WS confirmed that wolves from the Double Springs pack killed a calf on private land in the upper end of the Pahsimeroi. On 4/24, WS investigated a report that the pack had killed another calf in the area, but evidence at the site suggested the calf had been stillborn and had been fed on by coyotes. Efforts to stop further depredations are underway.

On 4/24, WS confirmed that a pair of wolves (likely from the Applejack pack) killed 1 ewe on private land near Horseshoe Bend. The herder shot the wolf among his sheep and Idaho Fish and Game officers investigated and confirmed that the kill was legal under state law (or under the old federal 10j law). The second wolf remained in the area and killed a second sheep the next morning and although nonlethally harassed by the landowner, would not leave the area. A shoot on site permit for one wolf has been issued to the producer. Fish and Game and Wildlife Services are reviewing other potential nonlethal actions to assist in this area.

Management

CO Eric Crawford responded to a call of a dead wolf near Squaw Creek, and was able to find and retrieve the carcass of B277. A person apparently reported to the Sheriff in Challis of hitting the wolf as it crossed the road in pursuit of elk the night before (4/22). This wolf was originally captured and handled as a member of the Galena pack by Carter Niemeyer and B. Reeves in May '06. The collar was still functioning, but the frequency had drifted up above what had been bracketed. The pelt is still in good condition, so it will be sold at the Fish and Game fur auction.

A proactive nonlethal project is being developed between 3 sheep producers in the Sun Valley area, Wildlife Services, Defenders of Wildlife, Blain County Commissioners, US Forest Service, and Idaho Fish and Game. The effort to reduce conflict between wolves and sheep will include a cooperative agreement between entities sharing knowledge, funding, and manpower and hiring personnel to assist in nonlethal control in the area. Researchers from USDA Wildlife Services are attempting to establish a scientific approach to learning from this application. Fish and Game will be cooperating by assisting in training, oversight, coordination, and equipment sharing. Pending results of this and other ongoing projects and future funding, Fish and Game may expand nonlethal programs across the state as part of normal wolf management activities.

Many reporters have been asking for the total wolf mortality numbers since delisting and whether the number is higher under state management than under federal management. We have been seeing an annual increase in depredations and resultant wolf control actions every year since reintroductions under federal authority correlated to higher wolf populations and wolves establishing activity on private land with high conflict potential.

Year	April Confirmed Depredations	Wolves Controlled
2005	1	0
2006	3	0
2007	6	4
2008	14	9

This year winter conditions are keeping wolves at lower elevations during peak cattle calving and lambing seasons as well. All but one depredation report received has occurred on private land at low elevations. Many are occurring in areas we have not historically had high levels of depredations including Council/Cambridge area, Horseshoe Bend, Lemhi, Pahsimeroi, Ashton, Mt. Home and other locations on private ground far from core wolf areas. From March 28 – April 24 we have recorded 17 mortalities: nine lethal controls authorized for confirmed livestock depredations, two illegal takes, three control under the state law 36-1107, two vehicle collisions, and one natural mortality.

Fish and Game and Tribal biologists met on April 18, 21, and 22 to review wolf harvest allocation issues.

The following schedule is designed for wolf rule setting.

April 28	Statewide recommendations sent to regions
April 30/May 16	Public review and input
May 16	Summaries of regional public input, and final regional recommendations due to bureau
May 21-23	Commission meeting, Twin Falls
June 18	Brochure ready for final review
July	Brochure distributed

Information and Education

Regan Berkley gave a presentation on wolf delisting and state management to 20 retired Forest Service Employees on April 7 in Twin Falls.

Martha Wackenhut gave a presentation on wolf conservation and management to 30 elementary and high school teachers at a Project Wild Workshop in Pocatello April 19.

We also would like to remind people that when wolves are in the area, please be aware that they may attack or injure dogs. It often helps to keep dogs in kennels or inside buildings at night and to not let them roam freely when humans are not around. When fresh wolf sign is found, place dogs on restraints and keep supervised. The state law allows individuals to harass or kill a wolf attacking or molesting their domestic animals including pets. If you are

having concerns or problems with wolves close to your residence, please inform the Fish and Game Office nearest you.

Please help us manage wolves by reporting wolf sightings on our Fish and Game observation form found at: http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/apps/wolf_report/.